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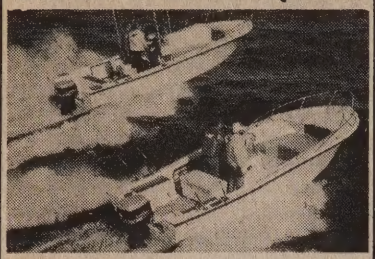

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★ EDITORIAL ★

What's in Store for '79?

Well, another year is upon us and it will only be a few short weeks before we'll all start getting cabin fever and begin to itch for the flounders to start coming out of the mud. And for those of us who are married, for the first time in almost a year our wives are actually begging us to go fishing. "Would you PLEASE get out of the house and do something ... do ANYTHING ... Go fishing! Because you're driving me CRAZY moping around here all day!"

Trying to predict what the new fishing season will bring is almost ridiculous, but for what it's worth here goes: spring run of cod will hopefully be improved as the New England Council's management plans start to have their effect, despite the bungling we've seen. Mackerel fishing will be about the same; the fish stocks have yet to recover from the massacre of over-fishing by the foreign armadas. Flounder fishing about the same—which hasn't been good. Fluke should continue to decline as the fish continue their down cycle which began about four years ago. Weakfishing will continue to deteriorate as the present population, despite evidence of several good spawning seasons, is further decimated as a result of overharvesting by fish traps, gill net, haul seiners and alas, even a few sport fishermen.

Striped bass? What can you say? Without a decent year class in memory to fill the ranks, the fish we catch will be few and far between. But the few fish that we do manage to catch will all be beauties. In fact, it's not hard to imagine that ten years from now the striped bass fishing of the late-Seventies will be referred to as the "good old days"! Picture it: a good catch of bass ten years ago was thirty or forty fish, all in the three to five pound class. Last year, a good catch was a mere half-dozen bass—but they averaged over twenty pounds each! So you can see how a fisherman ten years from now, once again catching his thirty or forty "rats" a trip, might long for the "good old days" when he used to catch five or six fish a trip that weighed out at more than one hundred pounds! But I guess in the final analysis the quality of fishing can only be measured against how good or bad it was the previous tide.

Bluefish? Hard to believe, but there's no reason to think that the action in 1979 won't be even hotter than the terrific blitz fishing of '78. The major factor that could possibly change this would be if something drastic happened to the huge population of sand eels, which is the real key to the excellent bluefishing we've been experiencing the last several years. But barring any unforeseen environmental disaster to this favorite food of the bluefish, we should have another excellent year fishing for the choppers.

Offshore fishermen should be in their glory this year with the return of schools of bluefin tuna after their many years of absence. Trolling for school tuna was excellent this year, with some boats even catching their limit. With the new restrictions proposed on purse-seining tuna, this situation can only improve. And don't forget the excellent fishing we've been having for giant bluefins and yellowfin. Hopefully, these fish will move further west this year and move into their old haunts like the Mud Hole so that fishermen in the New York Bight can get in on the action. Another offshore area that should get considerably more attention this year is the night fishing for swordfish with the new Cyalume Sticks that give off a bright green fluorescent glow that seems to attract the Numero Uno game fish for some reason. As more offshore anglers learn of this simple technique (which also works well for giant tuna and **possibly** striped bass), I'm sure we'll be seeing multiple catches of swords hauled up on the scales.

But in the final analysis, it doesn't really matter that much how many fish we catch ... because there's a hell of a lot more to fishing than just catching fish. In fact, some fishermen have turned this negative factor into an art form.

The Long Island FISHERMAN

The Difference Between Just Fishing and Catching Fish!

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COMING NEXT WEEK:
RIGGING EELS

About the Cover—

Rigging eels properly is as much an art as fishing them. If you would like to up your cow bass score, see Dick Mermon's Article on page 22.

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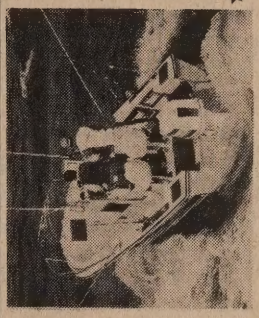

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BOATING

FREE BOATING COURSES

Robert Bocchicchio Public Relations Officer for Flotilla 223, Cold Springs Harbor, announces a Free Boating Safety Course, starting Tuesday, January 16, covering all basic boating needs. Course will start at 8PM at the Cold Spring Harbor H.S. (Turkey Lane).

Also, on March 27 will be a Young Boatmen's Course (three lessons). This course is compulsory for operators under 16-years-of age. Students completing this course will receive a State License to operate a motor boat.

For further information, call: (516) 757-7825.

SAFE BOATING IS NO ACCIDENT!

If you had never flown a plane before, would you try to take your family on a plane ride without having taken lessons?

The obvious answer is an emphatic NO! Yet, for some strange reason, many otherwise logical people buy the largest boat they can afford and, with no prior experience or training, take off for a day on the water, loaded to the "gunnels" with family and friends. Usually, the results are predictable and unpleasant.

Despite this caveat, boating is a wonderful sport and family activity. In order to enable you to enjoy this pastime to the fullest, Flotilla 13-8 U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary once again offers the "Boating Skills and Seamanship Course." This 12-lesson course covers Boat Handling, Aids to Navigation, Compass and Charts, Piloting, Rules of the Road, Radiotelephone, Marlinspike Seamanship, Legal Requirements and a number of other subjects which will enable you to operate a boat safely and efficiently.

This course will be given at Seaford High School starting Tues., January 23. Registration will take place on January 15, 16 and 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the High School located on Seamans Neck Road, north of Sunrise Highway.

The same course will also be given at Bethpage High School starting Tuesday, February 6. Registration at Bethpage will take place on January 29 and 31. Both courses are offered free of charge, except for a materials charge and a school district registration fee.

In addition, Flotilla 13-8 will also offer the N.Y. State Young Boatman course required for all youths between the ages of 10 and 16 who wish to operate a boat by themselves. There are no fees of any kind for this course. You may register at

"On Reynold's Channel, Lawrence— At the foot of the Atlantic Beach Bridge"

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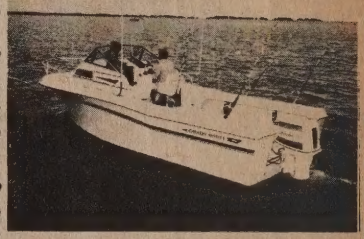

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either of the above locations.

For further information regarding any of the above courses, please call WILSON MEIER, (516) 798-0798.

Don't miss this opportunity to increase your boating pleasure and safety. Register for your boating class at either of the above locations.

Remember, safe boating is no accident!

FREE BOATING COURSE ON SOUTH SHORE

Captain George Barrett, training officer of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary 13-5 announces that a public education course will commence on February 6, 1979.

This will be a twelve-lesson course featuring subjects such as boat safety and handling, rules of the road, navigation, marlinspike, and communication. The classes will start at 8PM on Tuesday, Feb. 6 and will continue on successive Tuesdays at the Merle Ave. Jr. H.S. on Merle Ave. in Oceanside. Captain Barrett will be assisted by Captain John Heddon, Captain Al Essex and Captain Percy Paget (all Coast Guard licensed Captains with a combined boating experience of well over 100 years).

For further information, please call Captain Barrett at (516) RO 4-5323.

CLUB NEWS

HIGH HILL STRIPER CLUB FISHING COMPETITION: RESULTS FOR '78

It was a surf fishing season that was greeted with mixed reviews. For everybody who found a few good fish, others complained bitterly. I know that in my own case, the fall was very disappointing.

November Contest Winners: 1st Bob Buss—bluefish, 12 lbs. 6 oz.; 2nd: Jim Kelley—weakfish, 8 lbs. 3 oz. and 3rd: Mike Lowndes, striper, 21 lbs. 9 oz.

Club Points: Bob Krauss—2109; Fred Schwab—2015; Bill Muller—1446; Paul Reynolds—1219, and Frank Arendt—892.

Bass Pts.: Fred Schwab—774; Bob Krauss—662; Bill Muller—482, and Bob Teso—352.

Weakfish Pts.: Paul Reynolds—610; Bill Muller—392; Bob Krauss—376; Frank Arendt—362, and Fred Schwab—240.

Bluefish Pts.: Fred Schwab—528; Bob Krauss—360; Bob Teso—200; Bill Muller—172; Frank Arendt—160.

Release Pts.: Bob Krauss—2887; Fred Schwab—2286; Bill Muller—1857, and Bob Teso—828.

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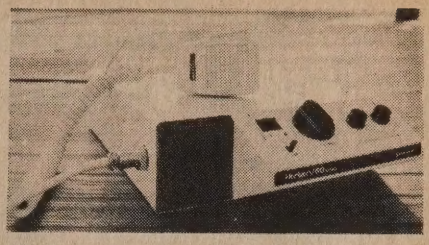

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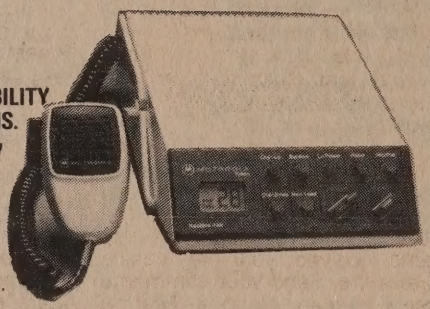

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Flyrod Winner for Year: Weakfish—Paul Reynolds, 9 lbs. 13 oz.

Women's Division: Bluefish—Mary Ann Young.

Junior Division: Bass—John Kelly; Blue—Bill Young, Jr., and Weakfish—John Kelly.

STRIPER SURF CLUB OPEN HOUSE

The Striper Surf Club, Inc., is pleased to announce that the Club will holds its 3rd Annual Open House on Friday, February 2 at 8PM at the Plattdeutsche Park Restaurant, 1132 Hempstead Turnpike, Franklin Square.

Last year's program on surf fishing for striped bass was such a huge success, the Club hopes to get additional space this year.

The emphasis will be on the surf fishing primer with classes on all technical aspects that go into becoming a successful bass fisherman. Last year, there was a turn-away crowd of 125 guests. Since we must reserve space and provide refreshments (for which there is no charge), reservations are a must. Since beer will be served, no minors will be admitted.

For reservations, please call: Mike Lynch, 212-738-0346 or Mike Campanelli, 516-541-1571.

EAST ROCKAWAY ANGLERS

The East Rockaway Anglers are having their annual Awards Dinner Dance at the East Rockaway VFW on Saturday, February 3, 1979 at 9PM.

They also sent in a get well gift subscription to The Fisherman for charter member JIM ABRAMS just home from the hospital. Best to you, Jim for a speedy recovery. **Fellow Anglers and LIF staff.**

Pass It On...

M.E.C.L.I. RECYCLE DRIVE

The monthly recycle drive of the Marine Environmental Council of Long Island will be held Saturday, January 20, 1979, from 10AM to 4PM, at the Pathmark parking field on Merrick Road in Seaford. Look for the Ecology Flag.

Materials collected are: newspapers and magazines (tied or untied), aluminum cans and car batteries.

NATIONAL SCENE

NEWS & NOTES ON THE WORLD OF FISHING
with Al Ristori

State Department Backing Away From Councils

The new spirit of financial restraint in the Federal Government has finally reached to the State Department. Our globe-trotting diplomats joined the President's call for economy by tightening the belt where it really hurts—travel to Fishery Council meetings at such exotic locations as Philadelphia and Peabody, Massachusetts! While, as citizens, we appreciate the Department's efforts to cut the budget, we're not quite convinced that the present effort constitutes a step in the right direction. Rumor has it that one would find himself in less danger if confronted by a herd of rampaging cattle rather than the legions of diplomats rushing to catch the next plane to Peking. Since our new-found friends are undoubtedly running out of cheeks upon which our official kisses of gratitude can be planted, it would seem that some changes in the economy program could be effected that would put the Councils back in the picture.

Regular readers are probably aware that I haven't always agreed with State Department policies. As a matter of fact, I can't remember ever agreeing completely with anything they've done! After years of fighting State as the real enemy of the 200-Mile limit (the foreigners couldn't be blamed for taking advantage of our own stupidity), it's been hard to accept the fact that the Department is now supposed to be on our side. After having been involved in some negotiations, I do believe there is a better attitude at State since the law was passed. The regular interchange of views between the Councils and State's fisheries people is an important factor in that new relationship. It's unfortunate that they've chosen to economize in this area, and I hope that the protests of the Councils in regard to the new policy will bring about a change in direction.

Long Islanders Miss Out On Tuna Hearings

The new management strategy proposed by the National Marine Fisheries Service was discussed in last week's column. Unfortunately, New Yorkers were bypassed when hearings were scheduled for informational purposes. Closest was the January 10 hearing in New Jersey. Other hearings are set for Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Virginia.

NMFS is to be congratulated for holding these information hearings prior to writing the new regulations in stone. However, the failure to hold a hearing in an area accessible to New Yorkers seems to signal an impression that there is little interest in offshore fishing on the Island. The same thing happened last summer, when public hearings on the Billfish and Shark PMP bypassed New York. I've brought this up at Council meetings, and also with NMFS officials. I'm sure everyone means well, but clubs and individuals interested in having a say about what's done to the offshore fisheries better let NMFS know that they want hearings held in the area. Since the new regulations will be based upon the information presented at the hearings, as well as comments received, your only choice now is to write. Send your comments to Bruce Freeman, National Marine Fisheries Service, State Fish Pier, Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930.

Mid-Atlantic Council Gets Shark Plan Moving

The Inter-Council Shark Committee held its first meeting in Philadelphia on December 11. The Mid-Atlantic Council has the lead role in developing a shark management plan for the Atlantic. In order to be sure everyone's interests are being taken into account, we invited the other Atlantic Councils to join us in developing this plan. Also invited was the Gulf Council, which has already let out a contract for a shark plan in the Gulf of Mexico.

The difficulties involved in formulating a plan involving many oceanic species are obvious. After all, thirty-six species of sharks have been identified north of Cape Hatteras—and there are many more in the warmer waters south of the Cape. Even within the Gulf of Mexico, there are over fifty species involved. Due to our almost complete lack of essential information for a management plan, we have no choice but to follow the lead of NMFS in their Billfish and Shark PMP, and create a plan that will cover all the sharks as a group. This doesn't make for a very neat plan as there are wide variations in fecundity, growth rates, spawning areas, etc., even among relatively similar sharks.

Since information is our primary requirement at the present time, our hope is to quickly formulate a "bare bones" management plan that will involve no regulation, but will have the standard reporting requirements for all types of commercial vessels (including charter boats). At present, the catch of sharks and the economic value of the fishery is little more than guesswork. The same thing applies to population levels. While a great deal of work has been done on the physiology of sharks, only Jack Casey's NMFS program at Narragansett has also been tracking migration routes and growth rates by tagging. With interest in shark fishing growing by leaps and bounds all along the Coast since "Jaws," it's important that we be ready to take whatever action may be necessary to preserve specific stocks should they be receiving too much pressure. The problem now is that we don't have the information upon which to base any such decision—even if the species (such as the porbeagle) appears to have virtually disappeared!

Though the Gulf has started off in their own direction, we still hope to come up with a single plan. It appears that there is some interchange of shark populations between the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts. Japanese longliners have been catching a great many makos while giant tuna fishing in the Gulf during the early spring. Since the tuna have been shown to end up in New England waters by the summer, it's entirely conceivable that the makos do likewise. That's just one of many mysteries we hope to have a handle on in the near future—but first, we're going to need everyone's cooperation in data gathering.

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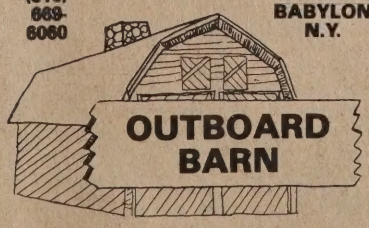

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FISH TALK

with Dr. William A. Muller

KING COD & OTHER THINGS

IMPRESSIONS! A new body of "green" cod moved into Long Island waters prior to the weekend of December 9 and 10, 1978, producing substantial catches of cod in the waters near ports like Montauk, Shinnecock, and Fire Island. Improved catches were made by both commercial and recreational fishermen in these areas. Strange, however was the apparent reluctance of the cod to take a baited hook in many areas west of Fire Island, although draggers scored very well indeed. "Green" cod are the migrating fish that move into our local waters each winter. It is believed by some that the appearance of the green cod (codfish with a greenish tinge rather than a brownish or rusty coloration) in our locale represents the "extra" cod from areas north and east of Long Island.

AN EXPLANATION!? What are extra cod? The use of the word "extra" is ill-advised because they are not extra or surplus, but there is simply no single common usage word that will adequately describe the meaning we intend to convey. Any species of fish has its range, or area of the ocean in which it is normally found. Although the size of the range does not change, the concentration of fishes at various points within the range may vary from year to year and from season to season. Generally, the fish density at the edges of the range will be less than the density of fish at the population center of the range. When a species has several poor year classes, is heavily harvested, or is decimated by disease, there will be fewer individuals and this will be most noticeable at the edges of the range. On the other hand, when a species has several good year classes, competition near the population center of the range will be very keen and this will tend to drive more fish towards the edges of the range.

THEREFORE?!? Most local cod sharpies suggest that the quality of the codfishing in Long Island waters is improving, albeit slowly. They suggest that inshore Long Island waters represents one edge of the cod's range. During the winter months, the "spill-over" of the northern and eastern stocks of the species moves inshore. These fish are characteristically green. Their appearance signals the start of our winter codfishing. Most skippers reported a fair number of rather small cod in 1978. The combination of fairly plentiful small fish and improved catches, to say nothing of the absence of the Russian factory ships off the South Shore, has everyone thinking that codfishing is on the upswing. The impressions are probably quite accurate, since the best scientific data available supports this notion. There was at least one outstanding year class of cod several years ago and with controlled foreign harvests, the prospects for future codfishing looks good too.

WINTER VERSUS SPRING! There is quite a difference between winter and spring codfishing. In the spring, the cod become very frisky as waters warm. An abundant supply of sand eels is usually available in the late winter as these baitfish begin to make-up into dense schools prior to spawning. At such times, the cod are often eager to hit diamond jigs. In fact, the jigs may out-catch clam baits at times in the spring. In the winter, the cod hit best when the fisherman uses the dead-stick method. The slightest motion to the clam bait often spooks the cod. The scene is repeated winter after winter on the party boats that leave from local ports. The neophyte to codfishing, having learned that the way to catch flounder, porgies, and the like is to use a tight line, approaches codfishing with the same zeal. Scattered around the boat are any number of regulars—men who are repeat customers on the headboats. These fishermen, the neophyte observes, toss the bait away from the boat, peel out plenty of slack, and then lean back and wait. The neophyte chuckles that this is no way to catch fish. Yet at the end of the day, it is the fellas with all the slack that have filled their sacks. It is impossible to imagine why the cod react this way. Some suggest that it is the cold winter water temperatures that are responsible; yet often the fish will be present, yet will not bite at all until the water gets to just the right degree of coldness. Still others suggest that it is related to the cycle of bait in our waters. For this, we have no opinion. In the final analysis we follow the old adage: when in Rome, do as Romans do! We certainly do not rate as cod experts, but we have dabbled on any number of occasions. Careful observation seems to confirm that the successful winter angler is patient, allows plenty of slack so that the bait won't move as the boat swings, and watches for minor twitches and bounces that signals the presence of a cod on the line. It isn't necessary to strike a feeding cod quickly. Take, for example, set-lining or the Portugese dory fishermen. These fishermen pay out many baited hooks, allow them to rest on the bottom, and then retrive the string of hooks. The fishermen can be deliberate because in winter cod usually pick up a bait, swallow it, and then sit still for some time.

WINTER FISHING GOOD? If you can take the cold, snow, sleet, rain, wind, and ice, winter fishing around Long Island is actually very good. True, the variety typical of our spring, summer, and fall seasons is not available, but there is more variety than you might think. For example, flounder can be caught all winter long if you pick your days and fishing spots carefully. Places like the Jones Beach piers always produce a few fish when there is no ice covering the surface. The action will usually rate as something less than brisk, but fish can be taken on mild, calm, sunny days. The big attraction, however, is the offshore fishing. In the rolling winter ocean, the fisherman can catch whiting, cod, pollack, ling, and occasional big blackfish. Although the cod have not been as abundant in the past ten years as they once were, whiting and ling have been very abundant and most skippers have had little trouble helping their fares fill up the fish bags on most days. Add to this the occasional encounter with a school of mackerel or herring, and you have the makings of some exciting fishing. The fisherman with a weak stomach should avoid these expeditions, since the ocean will be rough in winter more often than it will be calm. If you are the hardy type and do plan to go fishing this winter, be sure to dress warm. As a minimum list of outerwear, I'd include insulated boots, wool socks, several sweat shirts, a wool skull cap, gloves, a coat, and a foul weather suit. Underneath, I'd wear thermal underwear, heavy pants, a wool or flannel shirt, and a pair of nylon socks. If it is warmer than you anticipated, you can always take off a few items of clothing. Do not attempt to fish in winter with non-insulated boots! If your feet are cold, you will be cold. If you fish in winter only occasionally, try to borrow a friend's hunting boots. If you fish often, it may be worth the thirty or forty bucks as an investment in your own comfort. I use a pair of Royal Red-Ball Thermo-Ply boots. They are called top-laced Morgans (Model #ML581R). I have found that these calf-length boots keep me warm and dry and at the same time, afford me considerable ease of motion.

SHORE FISHERMEN TAKE HEART. The surf fisherman's season really isn't over by the end of November. However, by then the

bass and blues have thinned out to nothing, the weather turns cold, and well—we may be just plain tired! Unless you fish the power plants, however, most surf fishermen are not likely to catch bass or blues during December, January, and February. However, if you have a mind to, you can catch whiting, herring, ling, and flounder from such diverse places as Montauk's Fort Pond Bay, Coney Island, Cedar Beach, and the South Shore Inlets. Last winter, for example, whiting were common at spots like the Sore Thumb Jetty, near the Tower at Robert Moses Park, and west towards Breezy Point. This year, there have been a few reports of abundant whiting from the Montauk area. Best action appears to be in Fort Pond Bay where access may be tricky, but the enterprising fisherman should be able to find a few places to fish. Bait fishermen take ling all along the South Shore when the weather is cooperative. From time to time, even a few codfish stumble up to the beaches. I don't think that there have been enough codfish around during the last decade to make shore fishing for them a likely prospect, but who knows what the future may bring.

DON'T FORGET FRESHWATER!

Many people think that ice fishing is something that can only be enjoyed by fishermen from upstate—yet nothing can be further from the truth. Ice fishing has a considerable following on Long Island; the trouble is that all too frequently the weather isn't cold enough to freeze the ponds and lakes solid. Walking, fishing, or skating on thin ice is a dangerous proposition; so if you plan to ice fish, wait until the ice is solid. Lake Ronkonkoma is a favorite among ice fishing fans and fishermen who know the area say that you can catch pickerel and a variety of panfish. I have never been ice fishing in my life, so I must report all this second-hand. If any of our readers are pros at this ice fishing, maybe they'd like to write in and fill us "in."

SINKER BOUNCING

(Continued from page 12.)

to your advantage to buy enough to carry you through the season, for you are sure to lose a certain amount in these areas.

Incidentally, if you are sincerely interested in hooks, and you should be, mail me a stamped, self-addressed #10 envelope (business-size), and I will immediately send you a copy of Mustad's "Guide to the Selection of Salt Water Bait Hooks." You'll find most of the hooks mentioned, giving actual sizes, etc., plus some interesting information on natural baits.

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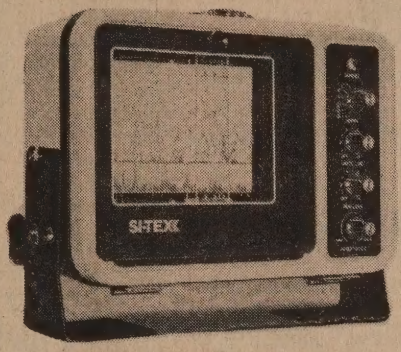

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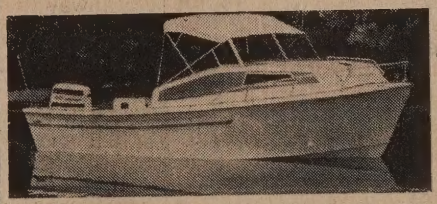

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Surf Side with D.W. Anthony

Real Reels

Wouldn't it be nice if we could buy one reel, one rod, and one plug for all of our fishing situations in the surf? It sure would, at least in some respects. To begin with, it would be cheaper since we wouldn't need an assortment of tackle and for another, it would be easier to maintain, store, and repair our equipment. There have been many times when I have deliberated about which rod and reel to take to the beach for perhaps an hour and in the end, I took the wrong one. Last week, John Fritz offered the rundown on various types of rods that are used in the surf and why—in our surf induced insanity—we end up more like collectors and less like fishermen. No matter how we try to argue the point, he was correct. Each type of surf condition, species, and approach requires yet another reel and rod. In the end, no matter how much we complain, we love it. If we only needed one outfit think of all the Christmas presents that we would miss out on and we would not have the joy of anticipating a new piece of tackle and then using it with great results once we got it.

The choice of reels for the fisherman is not always dictated by quality alone. If that were the case, all reels would be the same price and very expensive. Most of us have some financial constraints placed upon our spending, and there are times when the ultimate weapon is the ultimate impossibility. Some fishermen buy a reel because it feels good, regardless of the price. All surf fishermen have their personal preference and I guess that I'm no different. It would be so easy to say "buy this reel," but it would also not be a fair statement. The intent of this article is to briefly discuss some (I'm sure that I'll forget some manufacturer, so I offer apologies at the outset) models that are in use on the beach and have some measure of popularity. There are probably lots of surf fishermen out there that have far more knowledge about particular models than I do. I certainly haven't used them all, and I'll try to separate firsthand experience from second-hand research.

Before we continue, I suppose that it is fair to say that there are some fishermen who get by with only one rod and one reel, but I believe that these are few and far between. Those who are successful seem to substitute a lot of experience, knowledge, and applied stick-to-it-iveness when they find themselves with the wrong equipment in the "right" place.

Perhaps you have had the same experiences as I have. If you have been fishing in the surf for a number of years, you probably have a nice collection of tackle and your relatives have probably suggested that you buy a boat. When you refused, they suggested a psychiatrist. Anyway, even when Uncle Louie borrows one rod and reel and your brother-in-law needs a few for himself and his kids for vacation, you notice that you don't even miss what they have borrowed—until the next time you hit the suds. Then—you guessed it—the one Uncle Louie took was the one you need right now!

So, what's the basic arsenal? There will probably be some disagreement about the categories that I have selected, and with good reason. Still, I patterned my selection from those that hang on my own wall. The number one piece of equipment for the hungry surf fisherman is the big stick. It may be twelve or thirteen feet, but it is usually about eleven. The first choice of some of these surf fishermen is the big Crack 300. Unfortunately, they aren't available in this country anymore. We keep hearing rumors that either reels or parts are going to be imported by this tackle shop or that, but to date, we have seen no evidence that the rumors are true. Competition for Crack reels and parts has been absolutely frantic and whenever it gets out that one may be on the market, regardless of condition, it's like the camels heading for the oasis. In short, if you have a Crack or two, hold onto them since they may have to last you a lifetime. They probably will, too, since the reels are very rugged. However, the Crack is one of the heaviest reels for its size and some fishermen find this to be a distinct disadvantage.

But there are alternatives. Many a surf fisherman puts down Garcia/Mitchel or Mitchel/Garcia (whatever the current status of that company is). Granted, some of their models have not always been greeted with enthusiasm by surf fishermen. However, one model series (386 - 496) includes standard spool, skirted spool, left-handed and right-handed models. These reels are simply designed and have proven—by firsthand experience—to be tough and smooth. These reels are very similar in engineering principle to the big Crack, yet are lighter and it is easier to find replacement parts. Now, if you can talk a machinist friend into making a Teflon washer for your reel, you have a piece of equipment that will stand up to the fight of any bass or blue. These reels can also be easily converted to manual pick-up, if that's your fancy. Garcia makes a manual pick-up that adapts to the reels. Like other big reels, these have a rather fast retrieve ratio that allows the fishermen to work fast surface lures, as well as plugs slowly at night.

There are other good reels too, and again, your selection will depend upon many personal considerations. For example, if you have a passion for bait fishing or only working plugs very slowly, then the Shimano LP-7 reel may be the one for you. Here's a sturdy workhorse that will allow you to tame everything from a rampaging bluefish to a powerful channel bass. The reel has a slow retrieve ratio, but offers substantial power.

Penn products have been the choice of many surf fishermen for years. The 704 and 704Z and the manual 706 are large, rugged, and serviceable products. Penn packs Teflon washers with each reel and it is a good idea to use these to replace the acetate, leather, or fiber washers that are placed into the reel at the time of manufacture. Teflon provides a smoother drag and this is important when fighting big saltwater game fish.

The Big Daiwa reels are also very popular. Models like the 6000 and 7000 feature large line capacity, smooth drags, and easily obtained replacement parts. The reels are priced competitively.

We recently had the chance to try the Kencor Spinit 765AA. We replaced the existing washers with Teflon and used the reels with satisfactory results.

Quick (D.A.M. Manufacturing Co.) also makes a fine line of reels and the Quick 330 is a favorite among those who work the high surf. The Quick is noted for the very strong housing and its corrosion resistant quality. Some reels can't take the salt, but Quicks can!

Zebco makes the Cardinal and Omega series for saltwater use and they also boast that the reels can take the salt, have a smooth drag, and are quiet. The Olympic 505 is worth looking at too.

John Fritz probably also convinced you that you need a smaller stick. Whether that should be a ten footer with a whippy action or a stubbier eight or nine footer, is a matter of personal choice. Regardless of the size, the intermediate-sized reels (they vary a bit) will be good matches for rods of this size. Anyway, there are a number of good choices. The Garcia/Mitchel 306 features a drag system that is the essence of design simplicity and is very smooth. The Penn 710 and 712 are rugged performers that, again, feature the Teflon drag washers that make the drag smooth as silk. The Quick 330 is a reel that I have used and, like its big brother, is a tough customer. The addition of a Teflon washer makes it even better, but you'll have to make it yourself.

Daiwa also makes smaller reels and their product line has really caught on in the U.S. Models like the 2000/3000 are good intermediate choices. Olympic offers solid choices with the 303 and 202.

Zebco also makes intermediate sized reels. I have used the Cardinal 7 and I was pleased. I would advise that any fisherman who has any problem with the reel's

drag mechanism avoid doing the repair job himself unless he is a very proficient mechanic. It is best to have the reel serviced either at a tackle shop or by returning it to the manufacturer.

There are those times when even a smaller outfit is required, especially when you're working the South Shore's back-bay or Long Island Sound for spring weaks and school bass. Most surf fishermen prefer to use a light seven or eight foot stick under these conditions. There are many fine reels that can be used with rods of this size and weight; e.g., Penn's 722 and 714Z are fine choices and boast the same features as the larger models.

Perhaps you should give a look to Shakespeare. I have used the 2410 and the President 2910 with great success. They have proven to be strong, dependable, easy running, light, and fun to use. The drag system is very smooth and this makes fighting a fish a delight.

Any discussion of light tackle fishing should include a mention of the Garcia/Mitchel 300. This is a reel that has been used by countless fishermen and with excellent results. The proof of the pudding is that they still come back for more 300 reels year after year.

Zebco Cardinal, Daiwa, Olympic, and Quick all make ultra-lights that are very popular serviceable reels.

Conventional Reels.

Many surf fishermen are now taking to bait casting tackle when the circumstances call for lighter equipment. They find that they can throw heavier lures and maintain better control over a fighting fish. Again, the fisherman can be mystified by an array of excellent products. The Shakespeare President 1984-B is a fine product. The drag is like honey running down a warm spoon and the adjustable tension system means that backlashes are virtually a thing of the past. Most modern reels offer this feature. Reels like the Daiwa Millionaire and Ambassadeur reels are tough little reels that get the job done. Even the occasional bigger fish that may horn in on your action will not be beyond the limits of your tackle. The Shimano Bantam 100 looks too small for the job at first glance, but in use, the reel turns out to be strong in the clutch. In use, the odd-looking level wind gave us no problems. These little reels from the Shakespeare to the Shimano have really turned me on. They are light and easy to use: you can fish an entire tide and feel like you never lifted a finger.

Their bigger brothers are just as good at what they do as the little guys are at their tasks. I like the Ambassadeur 900C, although other fishermen swear by the 9000 and others claim the smaller 7000 and 7000C are big enough for any job. I have found that the 9000C is smooth casting and the drag is clean without any stuttering. I especially like the automatic power shift. When a big fish runs, the reel shifts to a smaller gear ratio that gives you more power on the fish.

Many surf fishermen still prefer the Penn Squidder and with good reason. The reel can handle almost any punishment that man or fish can give it and come back asking for more. It is easy to change spools and easy to keep clean. The drag is very smooth and although some fishermen claim that the automatic clutch engaging feature of the Ambassadeur models is an advantage, old hands with the Squidder say that the advantage is modest. The Penn reel can also be adjusted to apply more tension on the spool to prevent backlashes, but we have found the Ambassadeurs are better at the job. On the other hand, the Squidder with the plastic spool is very easy to cast and there is minimum backlash due to wind vanes on the sides of the spool that prevent over-running. The Squidder is available without level wind, as is the Ambassadeur line, so there is simplicity in the mechanism.

Okay. John told you that he recommends that you buy about six rods. I hope that this information will make it possible for you to go out and buy a reel for every one of them. There certainly is a good variety of quality products to choose from. Now the only missing ingredient is the cash, right? I know that feeling. Why not ask your boss for a raise. After all, you deserve it.

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Sinker Bouncing

with Matt Ahern

How to Select Proper Hooks

Wouldn't it be jim-dandy if one hook sufficed for all fish? How simple then the fisherman's task. Then all we'd have to say in the tackle shop is "Gimme a hook," instead of knowing correct nomenclature if you want the hook of your choice. Yet we sport fishermen who dunk bait should consider ourselves lucky, for actually we have only a few important hook styles to remember. Look through any hook catalog; most carry enough different patterns to make your head swim. O. Mustad and Son of Oslo, Norway alone manufactures over 50,000 styles for fishermen in one hundred thirty countries! So what we fellows really need to know is child's play compared to that. For our fishing, only a few patterns are important and we'll discuss them shortly; but before we get further into this, I just want to say that when laying in a seasonal supply of hooks, always buy the best. The best cost only pennies more than inferior grades. There are many imports on the market, and from my own experience and personal preference, none of these imports can stand up to those put out by Mustad. If your interest lies with American brands, don't overlook the Eagle Claw and those put out by Pflueger. These, like the Mustads, have never let me down—which is something I can't say for some of those "Hong Kong Specials" I've tried over the years.

Never hesitate to shell out those extra pennies for quality hooks: you'll never regret it. Don't forget, it is that ten cent hook that is the only connecting link between you and the fish. If it fails, so do you. The best rod and reel are nothing more than aids to get that thin, curved bit of tempered steel where it will do the most good.

There are only eight types of hooks that local sinker bouncers consider important. In their proper sizes, these hooks will catch any of the bottom dwellers we seek; but some will do it better than others, and this is the important part. I'll give you a quick rundown and then we'll get to each individual fish.

Sproat ... This is an old-timer and most fishermen have used it at one time or another. There probably isn't a fish that accepts bait anywhere in the world that hasn't been caught on this hook. Highly dependable and excellent for most fish, ranging from soft-mouth flounder to the leather-jawed cod.

Claw and Beak ... These are extremely sharp, strong hooks, designed for quick-biting fish. The Claw-type is quite popular and is also known as the Eagle Claw of American manufacture. The Beak style, by Mustad, is similar in appearance, and fishermen find both these to be good all-around hooks for fish with medium to large mouths. One word of caution here. Avoid those in the bait-holder pattern. They will present your bait in an enticing manner, all right, but should your fish be small, or if the hook is lodged in the gullet, you'll have the devil's own time removing it. I've seen instances when even the finest hook disgorger proved useless under these circumstances. Those extra slices along the shank act much the same as the barb itself.

Carlisle ... Another long-shanked hook. This is the fluke fisherman's pet. It is thin enough to be used with live bait, yet strong enough to hold the largest fluke.

Limerick ... Primarily the commercial fisherman's hook and in its larger sizes are often seen on trawl lines. This hook has an oversized eye to accommodate the heavy trawl lines in use. A good hook for the sport fisherman, and I've decked many a cod with them.

O'Shaughnessy ... A good, strong hook. While similar to the Sproat in appearance, it is heavier and has a slightly longer depth of bite. Fine for cod, but often takes a stiff rod to drive home.

Virginia ... This is the blackfisherman's hook. Its sharp, offset hollow point and barb make for quick penetration. Can also be used for sea bass and porgies with good results.

These are the hook designs local sinker bouncers will find to be most useful. As noted before, any of these hooks in the correct size will work on all our common bottom feeders; some, of course, will do a better job than others. Following are the important fish sought by most sinker bouncers.

Blackfish: Because of the black's peculiar method of feeding, the Virginia hook is the one to use whenever possible. Use a #5 or #6 for inshore; #5 for average offshore fishing, and either #2 or #3 for those areas known to harbor outsize fish. When using Sproats, a 1/0 is good for inshore, and 2/0 or 3/0 for offshore. The same applies when using Claw or Beak hooks.

Cod: Sproats in sizes from 6/0 to 8/0 are most popular. Claws and Beaks, 6/0, also work well. When using Limericks, I've had the best luck with a 5/0. In the O'shaughnessy pattern, you'll find 6/0 works well.

Flounder: Chestertown in sizes nine or ten are best. These are long-shanked because of the difficulty often found in hook removal. There are Chestertown hooks with regular shanks available and if you can find these, my advice is to use them. I've always found them to produce better than long shanks. Another good flounder hook is the Sproat #6, an extremely light hook that takes little or no effort on the angler's part to set.

Fluke: As noted before, the Carlisle style does its job well. This is a long-shanked hook needed to avoid the fluke's sharp teeth. A 2/0 to 5/0 is most popular. Sproat hooks, however, seem to be gaining in popularity. This is because more and more fishermen are beginning to realize that this lighter, regular shanked hook gives more action to the bait. These can be 1/0 to 4/0. My advice is to stay with the smaller sizes for the above-stated reason.

Porgy: For this quick-biting fish, you'll find a #6 Sproat or a #8 Virginia will do the trick when inshore fishing where the fish average below one pound. For average-sized sea porgies, a 1/0 Sproat is preferred, with a #5 or #6 Virginia a close second. Use Sproat 2/0 or 3/0 for those outsize humpbacks.

Sea Bass: You'll find a 4/0 Sproat to be just what the doctor ordered for these large-mouthed fish. But any of the short-shanked hooks in like size produce well.

I suggest you make a list of those fish that appeal to you and visit the nearest tackle shop and lay in a good supply. Ask for them by number and style. Don't, for instance, just ask for porgy hooks or sea bass hooks. The tackle dealer's ideas on hooks for these fish may possibly be different than those stated.

When fishing for blacks, porgies, sea bass, etc. (those fish that live around obstructed areas), it will be

(Continued on page 9.)

Five pound weak that belted a small sandworm-baited flounder hook.

TRAVEL SPECIAL

COASTAL CAROLINA: *Year 'Round Possibilities*

by Don Millus

It was better than ninety-two in the shade on that late June day in Winyah Bay, near Georgetown, South Carolina, when I discovered that a thirty-five pound spottail bass (channel bass or red drum) outfights a forty pound striper. Six months later on a December morning, the temperature was near sixty and I was taking winter trout or spotted sea trout (a close relative of the weakfish) on light tackle and artificial lures as I waded in Murrell's Inlet near Myrtle Beach. Add the night fishing from the piers in February and March, throw in a spring run of big blues, add offshore fishing for king mackerel, grouper, and swordfish, and remember the fall run of spot that the old ladies (and everyone else, too) fish for from the piers—and you have some idea of the variety of Coastal Carolina angling.

It's a cold, clear Saturday morning in December as I write this. After a warm fall, we finally had a few days of cold rain and at dawn today, the temperature was down in the thirties. It will hit the high sixties in the sunshine this afternoon; and I have my choice of plugging for winter trout late this afternoon or taking a few dozen half-to-three-quarter pound spot on ultra-light tackle with my youngsters. Some of the best fishing of the year may still come when the summer trout (weakfish) start hitting artificial lures at night when we fish from the piers on January, February, and March. Stripers will be trolled up on the long-lipped Rebels or Mirrolures plus No-Alibi bucktails starting in February.

It's the all-year-round factor that makes me quite content with my move down here. I had always wanted to get a job near the Outer Banks of North Carolina, but unfortunately there's no Kitty Hawk College, so when I got the chance to teach at Coastal Carolina College in Conway, S. C., some fifteen minutes from the Myrtle Beach piers and surf, I considered myself extremely fortunate. Granted, I would miss the stripers, weaks, blues and blackfish in Long Island Sound, but I soon found that there were better things to do in January than stand in the cold at night near the outflow from a power plant and hope that the tide would bring some stripers near my tapeworm bait. And I dearly loved the trips from Niantic or Montauk to Block Island, but who needs snow blowing in his face when he's trying to hook a cod?

Not that Coastal Carolina is paradise; but it does produce more fishing days year-round than I've found anyplace else in the country—including both Texas and the Northeast. And I'll honestly admit that last winter's deep freeze shut us out on the piers from late January into early March. But most winters give us at least some fresh and salt water fishing, without gloves, in January and February.

But let's be practical. There is nothing worse than being told that the fishing is great right here—but last week or next fall! What can you expect on a casual visit here and what you can expect in a week's stay?

Let's stay with January. Some big winter trout may be taken from Myrtle Beach's Second Avenue pier with light tackle and Mirrolure plugs on high tides just before dawn. Cold! Leave this to the locals, unless you're a fanatic. But if you're in town in mid-winter, check with R.D. Brigham at City Bait and Tackle in Myrtle Beach (803-448-2543) for honest advice. He can also direct you on the shellcracker and bass fishing in freshwater; but you'll need your own small boat for that.

Pier fishing pays off spring and fall with some nice king mackerel in the ten to forty pound class, with occasional cobia, big sharks, and even a few big blues; amberjack and tarpon are caught rarely.

If the winter stays mild, croaker and summer trout will be taken on shrimp baits from Springmaid Pier, also in Myrtle Beach. Night fishing with light tackle may get good catches of **small** weakfish on grubs (lead-heads with plastic colored bodies. "Sting Ray" and "Mister Twister" are the old reliables). Again, check with City Bait or Springmaid Pier. Croaker of a half-pound or so

(Continued on next page.)

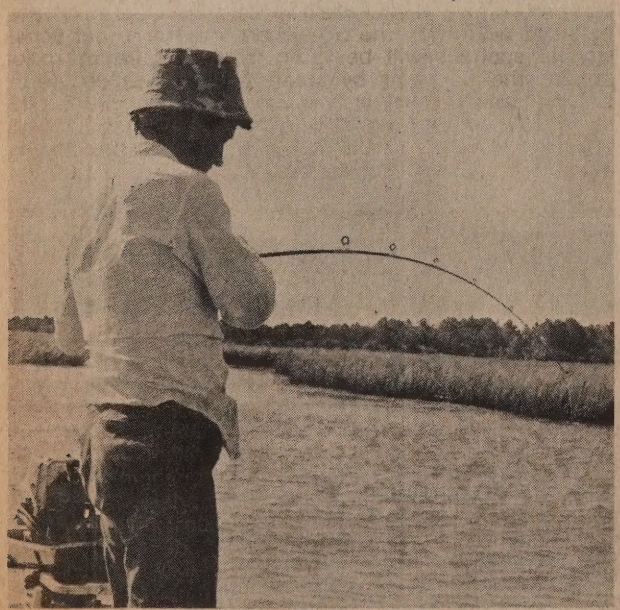
may run all winter.

Spring fishing opens for real in March with some trout at night (trout, on the Coast, are always the saltwater variety; inland a bit they can be "green trout" or "yellowfin trout"; that is, bass or yellow perch) and small blues in the day. Again, light spinning or baitcasting tackle is all you need. Black sea bass start offshore in March with some of the best catches made over the natural and artificial reefs from two to twenty miles offshore. Headboats run from Murrells Inlet, Little River, and Charleston.

Further offshore, the king mackerel may be in by March or early April at latest. Charter boats run out to the Gulf Stream, a three hour trip, for early season trolling. The kings will be available right up to December with the best fishing frequently in November, if it's not too stormy. Charters for blue marlin, wahoo, and dolphin are available all along the coast from Little River through Garden City, Murrells Inlet, Georgetown, and Hilton Head to Charleston. (For a complete list, see the publications guide at the end of this piece.)

Late April and early May would be a good bet for some sunshine and pier fishing along our coast. Blues, croaker, and perhaps spot from the piers, and blues (snappers, really) in the surf with an occasional spottail bass—all on cut mullet. Light saltwater tackle (seven or eight foot rod, twelve pound test line and two ounce sinkers with 1/0 hooks) is all that's needed in our very calm surf—it's not at all like the Outer Banks which is where I'd send the Montauk surf fisherman who's content only with big bruisers of blues and bass, both striped or channel. But even in the fall, the Outer Banks may only produce bottom fishing for the surfcaster—although good flounder and weakfish catches may be the result!

If you're going to take the wife for some early season sunbathing in May, bring a surfcasting rig and a boat rod with a 4/0 reel or the equivalent, loaded with twenty or thirty pound test monofilament. Go out on the end of Springmaid Pier, catch some croaker or blues on small hooks and present them live to the locals who are fishing for king mackerel and cobia, with hopes of anything else that may wander along. Terminal tackle will cost but a few dollars, and there's no guarantee of a strike, but it's a hell of a lot less expensive than a charter and there's not a chance of seasickness. You'll get tons of free advice, whether you supply a few live baits or not, but the live bait catching is an unofficial apprenticeship for the pier trolley-rig anglers.



Roy Brigham of City Bait and Tackle in Myrtle Beach not only is a good source of information for visiting anglers, but he also is a super flounder and saltwater trout fisherman. Here he brings a nice flounder toward his boat in Murrells Inlet. (Our southern flounder is a close relative of the northern fluke: big mouth, teeth, and an appetite for killies which are called "mud minners" down here.)

If your spouse is more oriented toward golf, tennis or culture, woo him (or her) with the image of Greater Myrtle Beach as a golf and tennis center. You can get a free magazine on the subject just for the asking from "On The Green," P.O. Box 1463, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29682. If culture is a good lure to get you some company on a southern fishing trip, the May Spoleto Festival in Charleston may be a secret weapon. Charleston hotel space is expensive during Spoleto, however, but Charleston is only a two-hour drive from Myrtle Beach's hotels, motels, and piers.

From May until November, the head boats go to the Gulf Stream and snapper (porgy, mostly) banks on weekends and on weekdays during the summer. Your cod rod with forty or fifty pound test will be right, but tackle on board is free and more than adequate. Thirty-five dollars covers a full day (five hours) of Gulf Stream fishing. Jimmy Stevens runs the only Gulf Stream boat out of Little River (tel. 803-249-2845), but there are a number of boats at Murrells Inlet and Charleston, too.

If you do make the Gulf Stream trip, bring your eight-foot saltwater outfit with fifteen pound test line and put a Floreo or other bucktail on a wire leader and keep it handy for dolphin or kings: great fun and it beats the cramped arms you'll get from cranking up silver snapper from 150 feet or more. Don't forget warm clothes in spring or fall; a long-sleeved shirt and hat are absolutely essential in the summer. October is a great month for Gulf Stream fishing on bottom—whether one charters a boat ($275 or so) or goes the head boat route.

Avoid the black sea bass trips in the summer unless you just want a boat ride. Fish are small and boats are crowded with tourists. But spring and fall can be fun with light tackle on these boats; but two ounces of lead and twelve pound test line are minimum, for there are rocks to contend with.

Small boat fishing in the inlets in summer means trolling for southern flounder—a cousin of the fluke. Some nice spottail fishing on bottom with live shrimp or live mullet; but you have to be able to throw a net to catch the mullet, since most tackle shops don't mess with trying to keep them in live tanks. Just outside the inlets one can drift for whiting (northerners know them as kingfish) on bottom with light tackle and strips of fresh caught snapper blues for bait. Troll around the new jetties at Murrells Inlet for plentiful snapper blues from August way into the fall! Clark spoons or Tony Acetta spoons work well. Very few boat rentals are available, except for small boats for flounder fishing in the inlet. Blue claw crabs are plentiful and very easy to catch with traps or hand-lines and nets.

Early fall means bluefish in the surf on cut mullet, again mostly fish of one pound or so. By the way, some big blues will be taken on the king mackerel rigs from the piers, and by offshore trollers in April and May, but the big blues move past our coast too quickly to guarantee continued action. Live bait fishing with a heavier outfit and a live small blue, spot or croaker will produce some good king mackerel and shark fishing for the small boat angler from five hundred yards to fifteen miles from the coast from spring through the fall.

Fall in the inlet means casting fluorescent red or green Mirrolures (sixty and fifty-two models are best) for winter trout or fishing live shrimp and float rigs for them. October (late) and November are the best times. Local shops can give the best advice. Favorite outfit is a Garcia Ambassadeur reel with fifteen pound test line and a six or seven foot rod to match. For the really dedicated angler, the plug fishing for winter trout is our equivalent of surf fishing for school stripers. If you're down here in late November or early December and are a really dedicated surf caster, bring your waders and foul weather top plus a water-tight belt and water skier's safety belt and try light tackle fishing for winter trout in the surf. No guarantees, again; but when it's

The black sea bass is the staple of the local half-day headboats. Spring and fall can produce some excellent fishing for one to two pounders. Headboats sail from Little River, Murrells Inlet, and Charleston.

It's not always warm out on the water, even when the blackfish (sea bass) are running in May.

good, it's very, very good. Check with R.D. Brigham at City Bait for an update on local conditions.

How to get to Myrtle Beach? Fly Piedmont Airlines to the jetport, take a bus, or drive yourself—roughly thirteen hours from New York City via I-95. Spring and fall there's no need for reservations in local motels and hotels. A list of them is included in the free magazine I mentioned.

Two other publications should be mentioned. Free from South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department is **A Guide to Saltwater Recreational Fisheries,** edited by Charles J. Moore. Write P.O. Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29412. Good lists of marinas, head boats, piers, boat landings, etc., are included. If you would like to read more about fishing the coast, then invest $3.45 in **A Contemplative Fishing Guide to the Grand Strand** (Sandlapper Store, P.O. Box 841, Lexington, SC 29072). It's by far the best book on fishing the area, even if I say so myself. Of course, it's also the only one; but that's because most people don't know that we have a pretty good thing going on the South Carolina Coast. Not great, but good, which is all most fishermen—myself included—want.

I've placed the emphasis on saltwater fishing, but the local river fishing for bass and panfish is excellent. Spring and fall are best, but you'll need your own boat. Then there's land-locked striped bass at the Santee Cooper lakes (Marion and Moultrie) just a few hours drive from the Myrtle Beach area. Spring and fall can be great, but all summer is also good. Santee Cooper is still the best all-around bass area in South Carolina and guides with boats are available, too. Write Santee Cooper Country, P. O. Box 12, Santee, SC 29412 and tell them I told you to ask for some free maps and booklets. While you're at it, write for free information on our State Parks, almost all of which are near good fresh or salt water fishing. Write South Carolina P.R.&T., 1205 Pendleton Street, Columbia, SC 29201.

In summary, for Coastal South Carolina: forget about big stripers in saltwater. They're in the rivers and bays or land-locked down here and the brackish water ones are school-sized. Big blues mostly in spring and usually offshore, but plenty of snapper blues through much of the year, with one and two pounders fairly common. Big spottail or channel bass are usually caught by locals who know the small barrier islands, but some smaller spottails will be taken from the surf or rocks around the inlets or by small boat fishermen. Both weakfish and winter trout are more common, but it still takes work to get them. The fishing isn't exactly easy, but there's usually something going on—whether in the inlets, surf, or from the piers or head boats.

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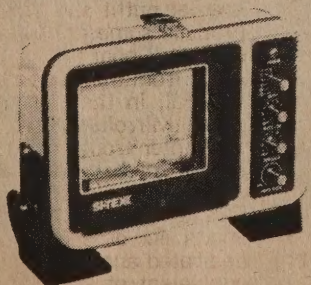

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ROD BUILDING SPECIAL

Custom Rod Crafting

Part Two—*Grips, Reel Seats, Guide Spacing*

by Mike Trailes

Once you have decided on the proper blank, you can select the other components and get to work building your rod. Because of the taper of the blank, all construction is done from the butt toward the tip in the following order: butt cap or gimbal, rear grip, reel seat, front grip, and finally, the guides are wrapped and finished.

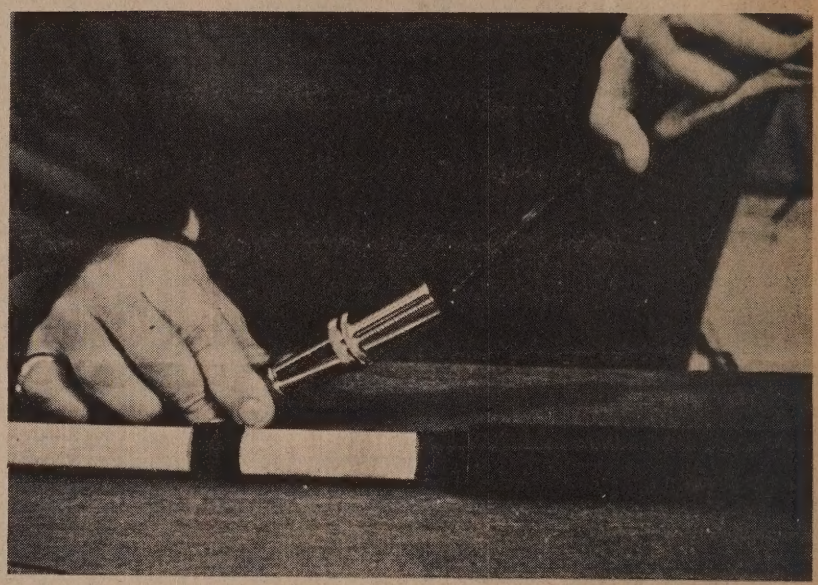
Butt Caps: Usually rubber or plastic, they protect the end of the rod and provide a cushion for the angler while fighting a fish. If you are going to glue the butt cap in place, wait until after the rod is completed should it be necessary to add some weight inside the butt to balance the rod.

Slotted butt caps or gimbals are used on trolling, boat and big game rods. They fit over a pin in the rod holder, gimbal belt or fighting chair to prevent the rod from turning. The two slots of the gimbal must be aligned, one horizontal and one vertical to the position of the reel. So fit the gimbal first, but glue it when installing the reel seat so you can line the gimbal up with the hoods of the reel seat.

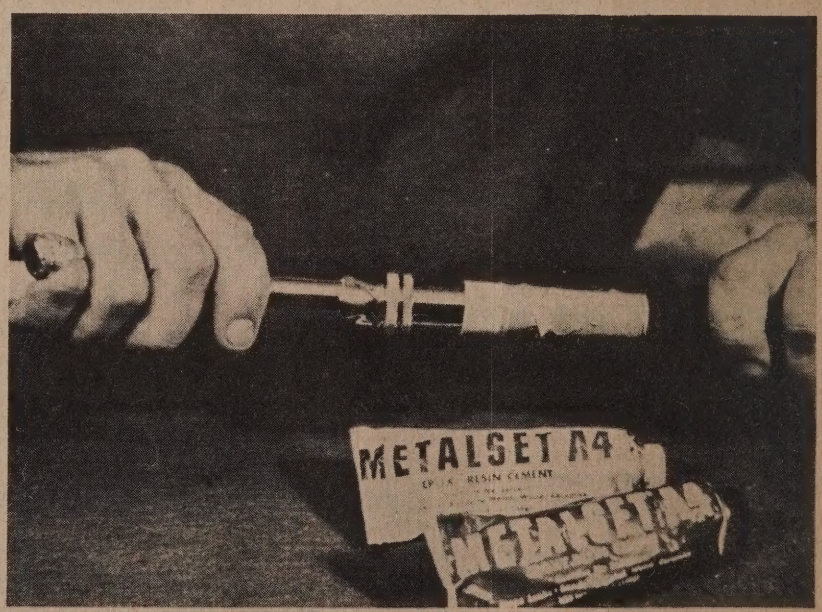
Grips: Cork has been the traditional material for building grips. However, because of the increased demand in other industries, cork is becoming very expensive. It is also a relatively soft delicate material which does not wear very well with rugged use. Self-sticking cork tape is a very fast, inexpensive way to make grips, but its life expectancy is about one season with normal use.

Synthetics have become the most popular material for grips. The heavy type has a rubbery texture with a tendency to become slippery and hard-to-clean. The newer type—a closed-cell PVC composition—is super light, cleans easily, does not become slippery in use. It is easiest to install.

Synthetic grips come in lengths from four to fourteen inches and various outside diameters. The important measurement is the inside diameter which will range from 1/8 to 15/16 of an inch. Once you determine the length of the grips you need, try to get an inside diameter slightly smaller than that of the rod blank. These synthetics will expand, but it's difficult sliding a grip with a quarter-inch hole over a blank three-quarter inches in diameter.



Use a round file to roughen inside of reel seat for best bonding surface.



Masking tape wrapped around blank builds up space between seat and rod blank. Epoxy securely holds seat after it dries.

Installation is very easy. Slide the grip down the blank until it begins to bind, then back it up the blank about the length of the grip. Coat the blank with dish detergent or Elmer's glue. Slide the grip into position and clean up the excess with soap water. Elmer's glue will give a more permanent installation. Grips on boat or trolling rods need a stronger adhesive, such as clear,

two-part epoxy. Follow the same procedure as above and clean up with acetone or similar solvent.

Synthetics also offer you another advantage: **colors**. They are presently available in black, brown, blue, red and green and they really "dress up" a custom rod.

There are no rules here, so design the grip lengths to fit you and your style of fishing. Synthetic grips can be cut easily with a sharp knife and they can be shaped with sandpaper. Be sure that the rear grip is not so long that it gets in the way while casting or is uncomfortable when playing a fish. The front grip can be short on spinning rods, but on boat and trolling rods, it should be long enough to slide your hand up the rod to get more leverage with bigger fish.

Reel Seats: Basically, there are two types of reel seats— anodized aluminum and chrome plated brass. Aluminum is lightweight and is ideal for freshwater rods. Brass is more suited for saltwater use since it will resist corrosion from saltwater much better than aluminum. Brass is also a stronger material and can withstand the heavier pressure exerted on the reel by larger, stronger fish. Many weight-conscious saltwater rod builders are initially turned off by the heavy brass reel seats, but let's take a closer look. Off the rod, a brass reel seat might weigh more than aluminum, but on the rod the extra weight of the brass seat moves the center of gravity back toward the butt and actually helps to balance the rod. In most cases, the finished rod will actually feel better because it is balanced better.

When sizing a reel seat, there are a number of things to look for. Pick a diameter that will fit the blank as closely as possible. This will eliminate a lot of "bushing" or building up and give you a strong glue bond. However, as the diameter of the reel seat decreases, so does the length. Be sure the reel you are going to use will fit in the reel seat. Too large a reel seat may not close tightly on the reel, and too small a seat may not fit a large reel.

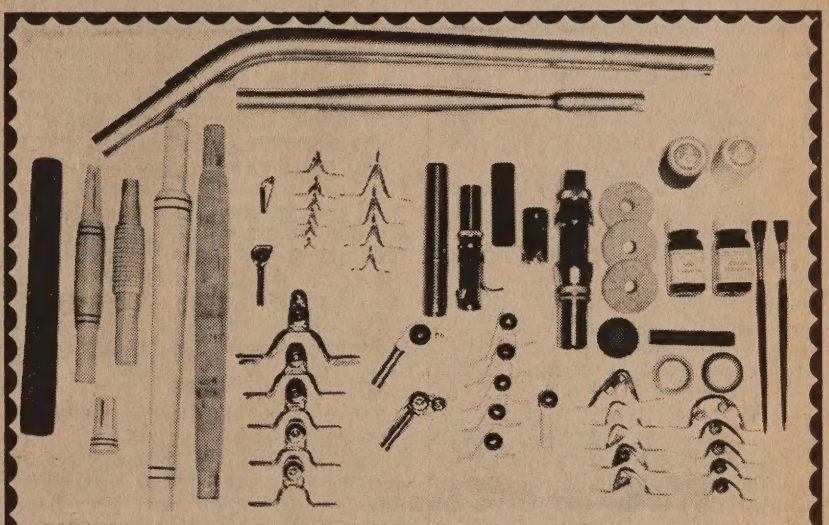
Installing a reel seat is easy with epoxy. First begin by roughing up that part of the blank which will be under the seat. Then take a round file and really give the **inside** of the reel seat a going over. Epoxy has a tough time adhering to smooth surfaces. Next, wrap three-quarter inch masking tape around the blank to form two bushings: one at the front and the other at the rear of the seat. The reel seat should slide snugly over the bushings. While you have the tape handy, put a single wrap around the back of the reel seat to keep excess epoxy off and make cleanup easier.

We recommend a two-part, aluminum filled epoxy such as Metalset A-4 or Marinetex because of its superior strength. A clear epoxy will also do, although it is not as strong. **Do not** use a five-minute or fast setting epoxy. What they gain in speed, they give up in strength.

Mix the epoxy thoroughly and spread it between the bushings. Slide the reel seat slowly over the epoxy rotating it slightly as you go. Take your time and make sure the epoxy is filling in between the blank and reel seat. As you come up onto the rear bushing stop, wipe off the excess epoxy. Remove the tape on the reel seat, and then continue to slide the seat up against the rear grip.

Now, with the reel seat in place and the epoxy still wet, find the spine of the rod. The spine of the rod, also known as high spot, hard spot or backbone, is the most powerful plane of the rod blank and the guides should be aligned in this plane.

To find the spine, place the butt on the floor or table and hold the rod at a 45° angle with one hand at the tip and the other two to three feet down the blank. Give the rod a good bend and roll it in your fingertips. You will feel it jump as you roll over the spine. Actually, there will be two jumps: one when the spine is at the top of the blank and a lesser jump when it is on the bottom. Roll and blank to the top of one of these jumps and mark the



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spine on the blank just above the reel seat. Now rotate the reel seat so the front hood is centered on the spine mark.

There are differing opinions on which side of the blank the guides should be placed—on the spine itself or 180° around the blank opposite the spine. We feel the difference is negligible. Mark either position of the spine and your guides will be aligned with the power plane of the rod blanks.

Guides: There is only one thing we have to say on this subject—CERAMIC. From soup to nuts, from ultra-light to 80# trolling rods, the ceramic or aluminum oxide guides are your best investment in rod hardware. Ceramic is a space age material which is super-hard and very slick. This means two things in terms of performance. First, being very hard, they will resist line wear and last a lot longer than guides made of stainless or monel wire and second, being so slick, they reduce line friction and give you increased distances on your cast.

There is a ceramic guide for just about every type of fishing. Lightweight, single-foot ceramic guides can be used for ultra-light and light spinning, as well as on fly rods. Regular ceramic spinning guides come in sizes up to 50 mm, and can be used for all types of spinning, jigging, popping rods. Ceramic guides with heavy duty brass or stainless frames are ideal for boat or trolling rods and can even be used with wire line. Just recently introduced by Fuji, are the extra heavy duty trolling guides BRHG Series which are rated for use with up to 80# class trolling rods. Carboloy has been the traditional guide to use with wire line. However, they are brittle and fairly fragile. Our experience has shown that ceramics hold up as well with wire line and are not as susceptible to breakage as carboloy. If it sounds like we favor the ceramic guides—you're right, we do! It just makes good sense to use the most functional, best-wearing guides you can buy. About ninety-five percent of the rods we make have ceramic guides on them. They are that good and you should seriously consider them if you have not already. Naturally there are many other types available, so check with your local dealer.

Guide Sizes: On spinning rods, the guides do three things: they funnel the line up the rod, hold the line away from the rod, and they support the line and distribute the stress evenly along the blank while retrieving line or fighting a fish.

The first or stripping guide is the most important as it comes in direct contact with the loops of line coming off the reel during the cast. It must be large enough to handle these loops without causing any restriction or choking. We have found with ceramic that the stripping guide can be a little smaller than with stainless or carboloy, with the same results. There are a lot of variables involved, such as line test, and reel size, but the following table will give you a place to start in selecting a stripping guide.

Rod Length	Standard Stripping Guide Size	Ceramic Guide
up to 6'	20 or 25 mm	25-30
6-8'	30 mm	40-50
8-10'	40 mm	50-60
10'-Up	50 mm	75

If you are not using ceramic, you might have to increase the size of this guide. Now select a tip that fits the blank. Using the tip and stripping guides, fill in with a graduated set of guides. The guide next to the tip should be at least the same ring size as the tip one, one size larger.

We recommend five guides and a tip for most spinning rods: ultra-light and light spinning rods may only need four guides. Too many guides will add excess weight and friction. Too few guides will not distribute the stress evenly and might cause excessive wear on one or more of the guides as the line might slap against the rod during the cast if the distance between guides is too great.

Conventional rods are a different story. The line comes off the conventional reel in a straight line with a small amount of lateral or side-to-side movement. The first guide can be a lot smaller—a 20 mm is usually large enough. The only exception to this would be for large casting rods using wide spool reels. Here a large stripping guide will reduce the friction from the lateral movement of the line as it comes off the spool during the cast.

The number and spacing of guides on a conventional rod should accomplish one important thing: the guides should keep the line from touching the blank at any point during the cast and especially when fighting a fish. This may require six or more guides, depending on the length and action of the blank.

After you have glued the tip on and lined it up with the reel seat, the next step is to determine the position of the stripping guide.

Stripping Guide Space (Approximate): This shows rod length and distance from Mid-reel seat to Stripping Guide.

Rod Length	Distance
5'	22"
6'	24"
7'	26"
8'	28"
9'	30"
10' up	32-36"

On conventional rods, start the first guide at twenty-four inches and adjust it from there for lateral movement and if the line touches the blank between it and the reel when the rod is put under a strain, mark the blank at the point where the stripping guide goes with a pencil. Don't use a magic marker or any kind of felt tip pen as the ink will bleed through the threads when finish is applied. Now, by trial-and-error, fit the remaining guides between the tip and stripping guide, increasing the distance between guides as you move down the tip. This will take some experimenting, but start with a gradual progression in inches such as, 6,7,8,9,10, or 7,9,11,13,15, and see how it fits.

Remember what we talked about in the first article—different bends and actions. If you are using an extra fast-action blank, most of the bend will be in the tip of the blank and you should concentrate more guides there. If it is a moderate action, you can spread the guides more evenly to accommodate the more gradual bend of the rod.

Spacing the Guides: If you are going to take the effort to build your own rod, take the time to do it right. The acid test if your guide spacing is correct will be under simulated fishing conditions. Figure out your spacing, tape the guides on securely, put a reel on the rod and go outside and cast. Then tie the end of the line to a tree or post, put the rod under a strain, and take a good look at your guide placement.

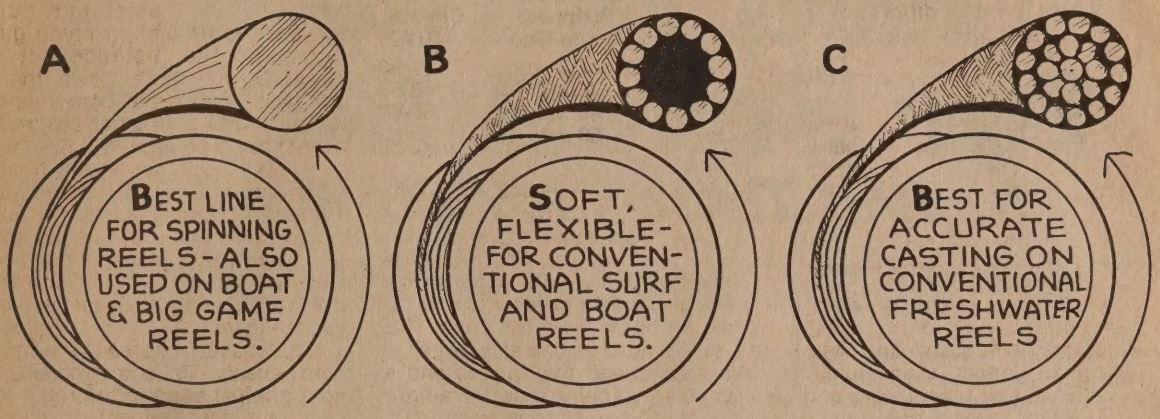
As you test cast, look for line slip or line hitting the rod at any point. If so, move the stripping guide back toward the reel a little at a time. If the line hits between guides you have too much space between those guides, so re-space them. If you cannot get rid of the slip by re-positioning the guides, you might have to add another guide.

Another thing to look for is choking. If the line balloons out in front of a guide, usually the stripping guide, and looks like it is being restricted from going through, then move the guide further away from the reel or go to a bigger guide. When you put the rod under a strain, you are looking for excessive strain in any particular guide. The angle of the line going through the guides will tell you this. Try to equalize those angles and get the line to follow the bend of the blank as closely as possible.

Once you are satisfied with the spacing of your guides, you are ready to begin wrapping. And we'll take a look at that part of custom rod building next week.

THE FISHERMAN QUIZ

(1) IDENTIFY THESE FISHING LINES...MONOFILAMENT ☐ BRAIDED DACRON ☐ BRAIDED NYLON ☐ *ANSWERS AT BOTTOM OF PAGE.*


A
BEST LINE FOR SPINNING REELS - ALSO USED ON BOAT & BIG GAME REELS.
B
SOFT, FLEXIBLE - FOR CONVENTIONAL SURF AND BOAT REELS.
C
BEST FOR ACCURATE CASTING ON CONVENTIONAL FRESHWATER REELS

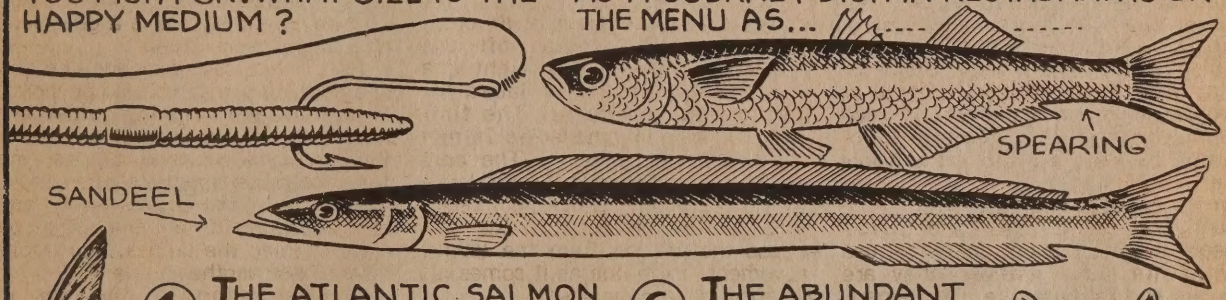
A SINGLE STRAND OF SYNTHETIC NYLON.

MANY STRANDS BRAIDED TOGETHER WITH HOLLOW CORE.

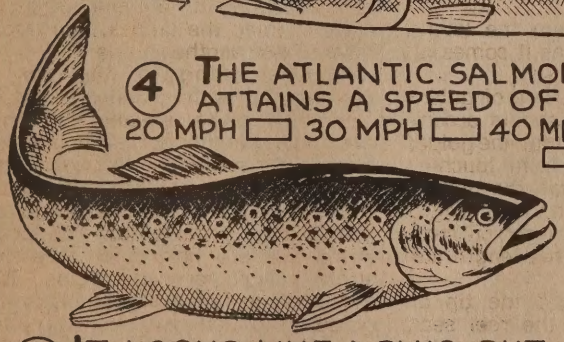
MANY STRANDS BRAIDED TOGETHER.

(2) HOOKS FOR PLASTIC WORMS RUN FROM 1/0 TO 8/0 DEPENDING ON WHERE AND FOR WHAT YOU FISH FOR. WHAT SIZE IS THE HAPPY MEDIUM ?

(3) SPEARING AND SANDEELS, COMMONLY THOUGHT OF AS GOOD ONLY FOR BAIT OR AS FORAGE FISH, ARE SERVED UP AS A GOURMET DISH IN RESTAURANTS ON THE MENU AS... ----- ------

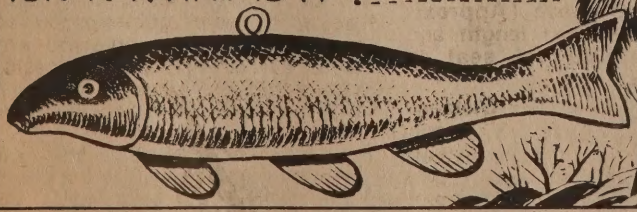


(4) THE ATLANTIC SALMON ATTAINS A SPEED OF 20 MPH ☐ 30 MPH ☐ 40 MPH ☐



(6) THE ABUNDANT RED FOX WHICH HUNTS THE NORTHEAST WOODS AND COASTAL SAND DUNES IS A NATIVE AMERICAN ANIMAL. TRUE ☐ FALSE ☐

(5) IT LOOKS LIKE A PLUG, BUT ICE FISHERMEN KNOW IT ISN'T. WHAT IS IT ? ----------



BY FRED GUARDINEER

1 - (A) MONOFILAMENT (B) BRAIDED DACRON (C) BRAIDED NYLON. 2 - SIZE 3/0. 3 - WHITEBAIT. 4 - 30 MPH. 5 - AN ICE FISHING DECOY. 6 - FALSE. THE RED FOX IS A EUROPEAN IMPORT BROUGHT HERE BY THE ENGLISH IN 1750 FOR FOX HUNTING WITH HOUNDS, HORSES ETC. THE AVAILABLE NATIVE AMERICAN GRAY FOX CLIMBS TREES TO GET AWAY INSTEAD OF RUNNING AFAR.

HOW-TO SPECIAL

Rod Holders for Small Boats

Part Three—ASSEMBLY

by Dr. William A. Muller

Last week we prepared the PVC pipe sections with galvanized clamps and sprayed them with metal primer in preparation for final assembly on the backboard. It hasn't been a difficult job. In fact, the hardest part of the process has probably been hunting for and buying the equipment. Before continuing with the final assembly, I thought it might be a good idea to make a few comments on where the materials can be purchased.

Most of the materials can be purchased in any well-stocked hardware store. However, you may have to go to a plumbing supply store to purchase the PVC pipe—we did. Chances are that you have a piece of scrap wood laying around that may not be 1 x 3 and thirty-six inches long, but will be adaptable to the project. If not, you can purchase the wood at a lumber yard. Most lumber yards sell wood in six, eight, ten, or twelve-foot lengths and if you do not have need for the inevitable excess wood, you might ask the yard people if they have any scrap pieces that might suit your purposes. It is likely that if you hunt around for scrap wood, you'll find it and you'll probably be able to purchase it at a very reasonable cost.

Back to work! You have previously marked, on the wood, the places where you will attach the clamps. Thus, you are ready to drill the wood. Use a 9/64 bit for a #6 screw and a 5/32 bit for a #7 screw and drill tap holes for the wood screws. Do not drill through the wood, but do drill at least one-half inch down into the wood.

Now give the wood base a coat of primer paint. A pint can of oil base white primer will do the trick. You need not apply the paint with artistry: just spread it evenly with any cheap brush. Set the wood base aside to dry for twenty-four hours.

The next day you can attach the pipe sections. Brass wood screws will go in easier if you rub the threads of the screws lightly across a bar of soap. The soap will lubricate the screw as you work it into the wood. Be certain that all the screws are sunk flush against the galvanized clamps.

Now you're ready to paint the entire rack with enamel. Wait for a sunny day when the air temperature is above fifty degrees and the winds are light. You can also paint the rack in your basement work area if you have an exhaust fan with enough pulling power to turn the room air over rapidly. Do not attempt to spray in a poorly ventilated room. The fumes and paint droplets suspended in the air are unhealthy and when the minute paint droplets settle, they will coat everything in the area where you sprayed. The result will be a nuisance to clean. In addition, oil base paint will dry slowly in a damp basement and other members of your family will likely find the odor objectionable.

Do not expect the first coat to cover completely. We applied four thin coats rather than two thick ones believing that thin coats of paint would dry more thoroughly. We allowed at least several hours of drying in the fresh air and sunshine between coats. When possible, we allowed the paint to dry for a day between coats.

Be sure to buy exterior paint for best results. Follow application directions on the can precisely to avoid running and paint built-up. We used school bus yellow to match the color of the John Dory, but almost any color can be matched today. If one company doesn't have the color you need, the chances are that you'll find the color under some other brand name.

Take as much time as you need to paint the rack. Don't rush it. Spray inside the pipe to cover the flat end of the rivet; also spray the back of the wood base. We allowed the rack to dry for several weeks before we put it on the boat.

We also lightly sanded the rack with fine grain sandpaper between each coat of paint to rough up the surface in order that each new layer of paint would achieve a better bond with the layer underneath.

Next week: installing the rack on the boat.

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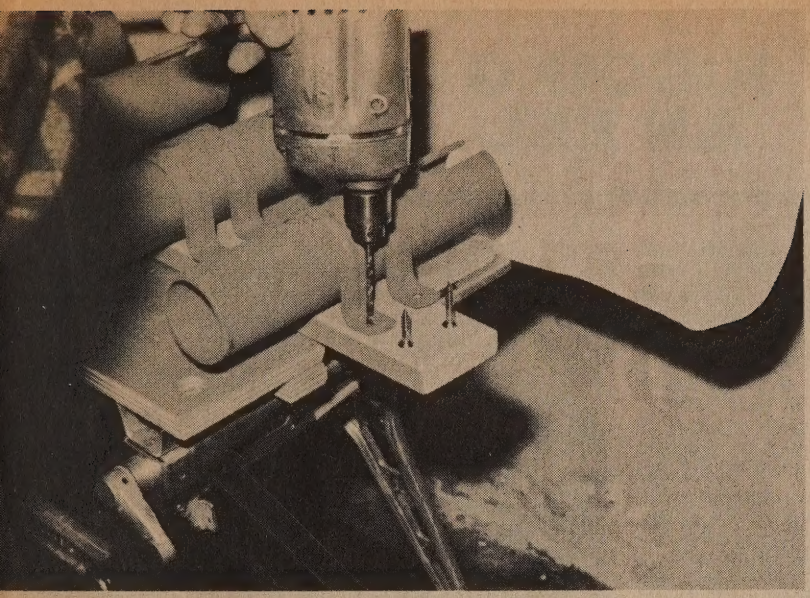
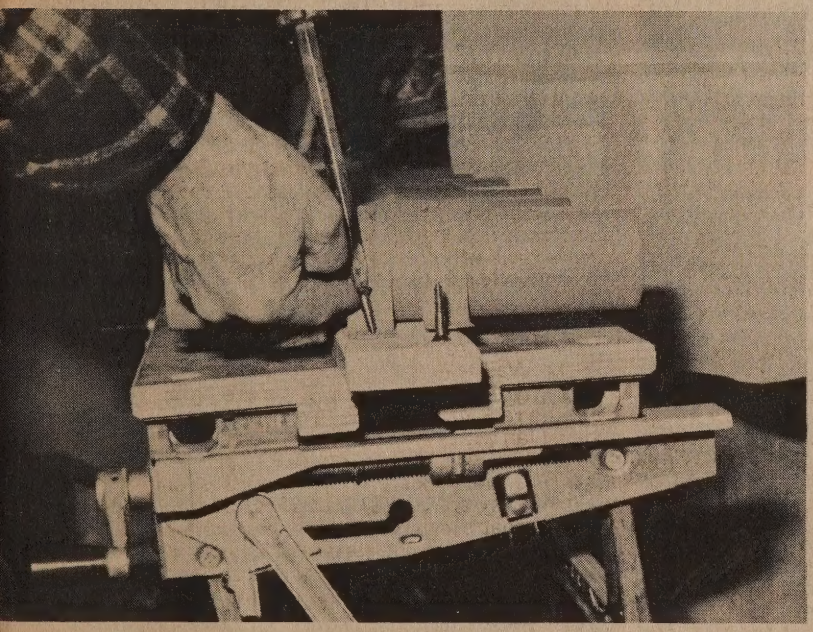
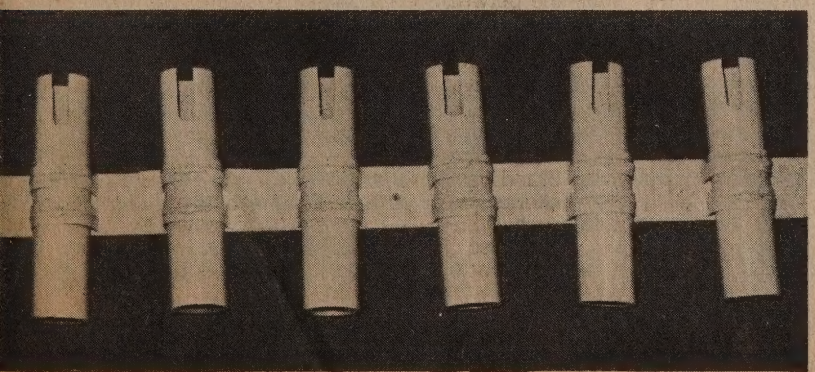


Drilling the holes in the wood base where wood screws will hold the clamp in place.



It is wise to use a screwdriver that is appropriate to the task. Screwdrivers that are too small will slip and may destroy the groove in the screw head; while screwdrivers that are too large will not bite the screw head properly.



The assembled rack, painted with several layers of enamel, is ready to be installed on the boat.

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HOW-TO SPECIAL FEATURE

RIGGING AN EEL

In this corner:
Dick Mermon

Eels can authentically be considered a three-in-one enticer of striped bass, bluefish and sea trout. If used alive, it is a natural bait; in a dead state it becomes an artificial; the skin alone—either attached to a swimming lure or ring—is an "IT." This situation becomes a neither this nor that type attractor. Therefore, an eel is truly an all-purpose bait where nothing goes to waste, even after death.

Rigged eels have long been the number one lure of jetty jockeys, night surfers and sand bar anglers. Several of these baits may be transported without threat of each finding a way out of the bag or compartment, leaving an angler empty-handled, as live ones would do.

Hook dressed eels can be of varied sizes. For the best in casting and motion, a fifteen to eighteen inch long eel seems to be favored by fishermen. This is not to say a bass or any other fish will refuse anything larger or smaller, but is a desirable length.

There are a few required implements that must be purchased from tackle outlets in order to rig eels. The most important is a threading needle, or prod, about fifteen inches in length with either a flattened eye or notch at one end; a large sewing needle and heavy duty type button thread; two hooks of 8/0 or 9/0 dimension; some eighty pound test braided Dacron line, and a pre-measured length of brass linked chain (or bead chain).

Fold a thirty-six inch length of Dacron line in half and fasten one of the hooks at the line's bend, then attach both loose ends to the prodding needle's end, knotting them together. Insert the needle's point into the eel's anal opening, passing it along the spinal column towards its head. By careful direction, the prod should exit out the mouth. Once the needle end is completely free of the eel, pull the Dacron and attached hook into the body. These lines should follow the same pattern as before, whereby the hook is drawn to its fullest length within the eel, leaving only its point, barb and a small portion of bend exposed. Untie the Dacron from the needle and allow the ends—which are now protruding from the eel's mouth—to fall free.

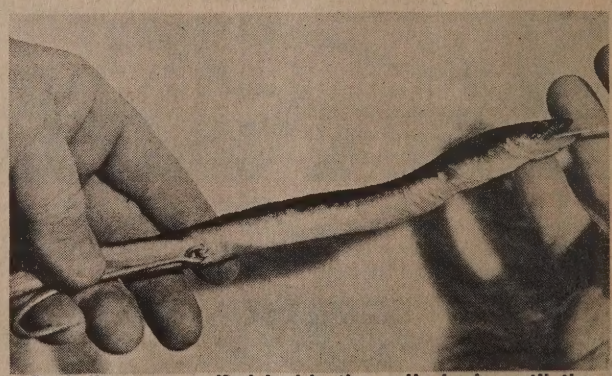
Take the second hook and insert its point deep into the open mouth and throat of the eel, pushing it through and out the lower portion of body. Here again, only the barb area is displayed. The full shank and eye is completely hidden within the eel's mouth.

Grasp both ends of the Dacron-attached hook and pull them slightly taut, placing a meager kink in the eel's lower section. Fasten one strand of Dacron line into the eye and shank of the head hook. On the opposite side affix the other line making sure both strands are equal in tension when knotted. This pulling and bending of the eel's body is advised only when a swivel is placed into the forward hook's eye. As the body is straightened, it draws the upper hook inward, leaving only the swivel end exhibited. If no barrel swivel is desired, then the lengths of Dacron line are tied in the same manner, but without tension. In this way, the front hook's eye is revealed so line from the rod and reel can be attached.

When such fastenings are concluded, the eel's mouth must be sewn closed either over the eye and swivel, or directly to the hook's shank. This is where strong sewing thread is required, for it must withstand tight abuse from overlapping knots. Not only will it prevent an eel from emitting bubbles while retrieved, but also forestalls the bait from spinning. Even a small piece of thin copper wire, manipulated in the same manner will also prevent such occurrences. A few

The prodding point is placed into the anal opening of the eel and passed along its spinal column.

Once the needle exits the eel's mouth, the threads (Dacron line) are pulled along the same pathway.

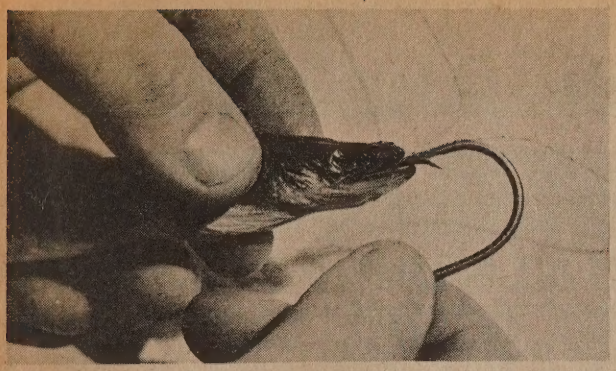


Both lines are pulled inside the eel's body until the entire hook is hidden except the point, barb and a small portion of the bend.

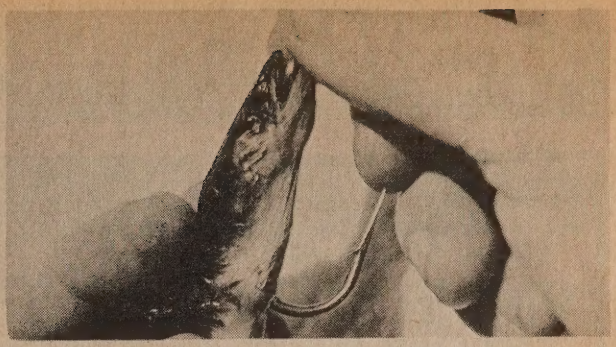
stitches can also be placed into the rear hook eye and skin of the eel, holding it steadfast, but is not absolutely necessary.

The eel is now completely equipped with fish-catching devices within its natural state. If a weighted bait is demanded for deep angling, then the lead is placed onto the front hook's shank and sewn within. It must be remembered that the largest area of the weight be placed downwards, which will react as a keel, supporting the eel in an upright position.

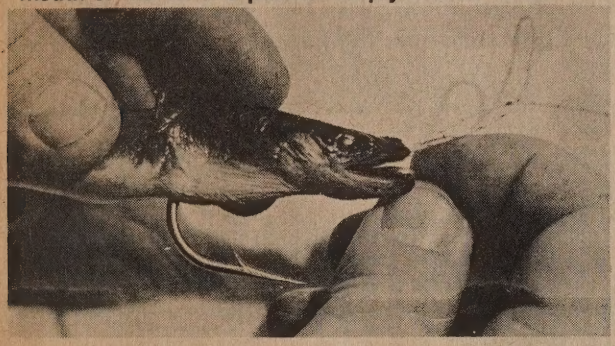
Each rigged bait is either wrapped individually in



The second hook is inserted, point first into the open mouth of the eel and pushed deeply into its throat.

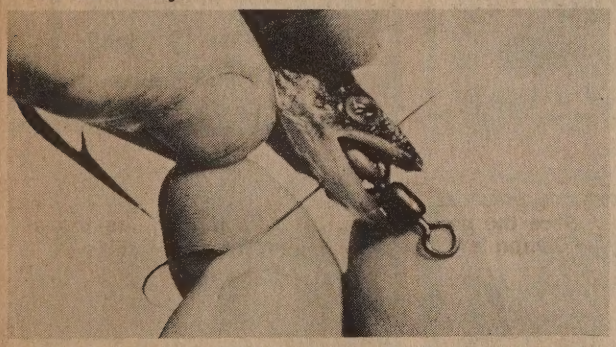


Once the hook is in the full length of the shank, it is brought out through the bottom of the eel and completely exposes the main factors.

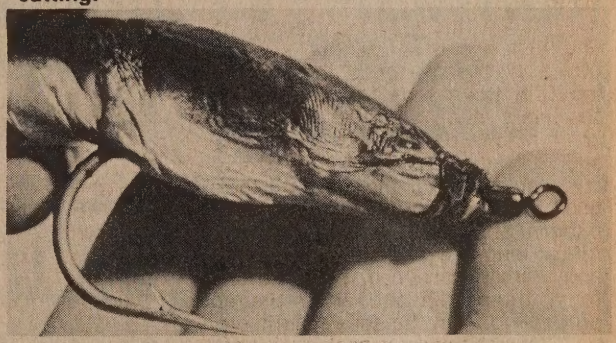


Once the hook is in place, both Dacron lines are pulled forward slightly kinking the lower portion of the eel's body.

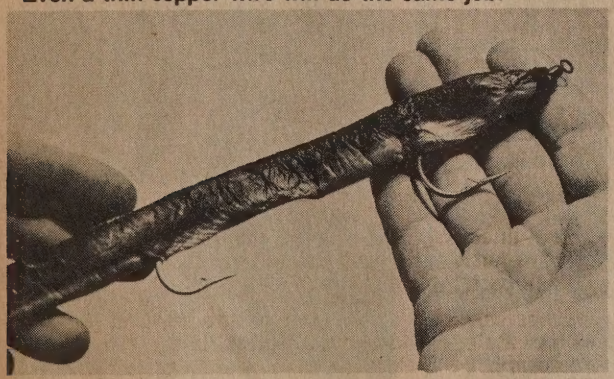
Each Dacron line is attached individually to the hook's eye and shank on opposite sides. This is a double security feature in case of knot failure or line cutting.



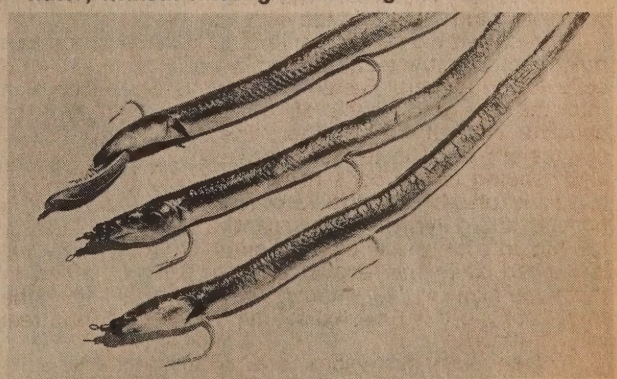
Whether a swivel is used or not, the eel's mouth must be sewn closed onto the hook or swivel itself. Even a thin copper wire will do the same job.



With the jaws sewn tightly closed, the eel appears to have regained its sleek ability to slither through the water, without twisting or emitting bubbles.



The finished product is truly a fine piece of work which any angler should be proud to use.



Three basic eel rigs (top to bottom) are: action head, weighted head inside, and natural formation.

tin foil, or cellophane and placed into a freezer. Now a lure can be utilized whenever desired. Before any rigged eel is actually used, it should be stretched from both ends in opposite directions, loosening its spinal column. This unlocks the bone connections and add limpness to the body. No eel swims in a headlong fashion. Hence, each bait must have the ability to produce these snake-like movements and it is the angler's responsibility to apply such gyrations. When its motion has been devised, the balance remains in the fish's temperament.

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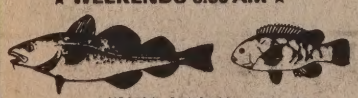
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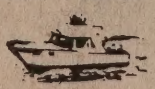
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Mike Albranda reported that a friend, John O'Conner fished aboard the **Viking Star** on Thursday and finished up with fourteen cod, averaging 15 lbs. Mike believes the fishing south of Block Island is beginning to shape up and all that is needed is some cooperation from the weather for some consistent fishing.

Captain John DeMaio of Montauk will be giving his fishing course this February at the Seaford High School. The four session course will cover topics in depth such as casting, trolling, diamond jigging and live bait fishing for striped bass, bluefish and weakfish. Tuition is $50 and you can get further information by calling 516-668-5130.

Pictured above is 12-yr.-old Charles Motzer of Bay Shore with his first bluefish. It was taken in November on the "Capt. Scotty" out of Captree.

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HINT #2: *After the bottom is prepared for planking (above photo taken early Dec.) it usually takes 18–24 weeks for completion.*

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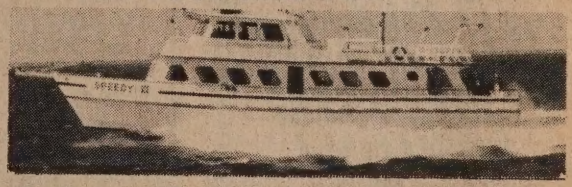
COD 6AM DAILY SPEEDY VI



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salt and pepper
1 cup mayonnaise
1 cup finely chopped onion
1 fresh lemon
paprika

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Remove and pat dry again. Place in a shallow baking dish and sprinkle w/salt & PEPPER.

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Serves six.

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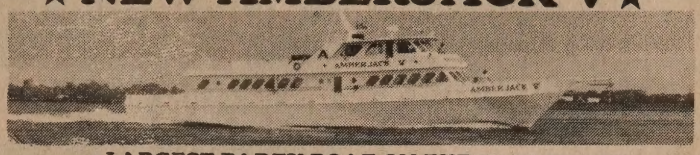

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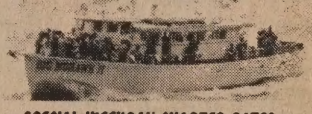

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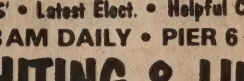

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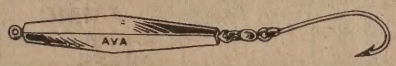

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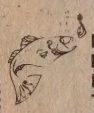

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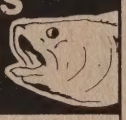

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FREEPORT

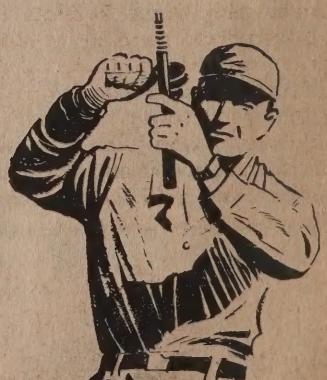
Captain Richie of the **StarStream II** reported that twelve fares managed fifteen cod running 10-20 lbs. on Friday, fishing fifteen miles south of Jones Inlet. Saturday was unfishable and Sunday's fishing was cut short by rough seas. Six fish were decked before returning to port despite the adverse conditions.

Captain Joe Long and Captain Walter Scott out in Joe's skiff, Hunky Dory, while out for some whiting at the Jones Inlet head buoy, on a 1/0 hook baited with a herring strip bagged a 27 lb. cod. Joe was on the other end of the rod when the fish hit.

SHEEPSHEAD BAY

The **New Amberjack V** reported that the whiting fishing remains good, with ling and a few mackerel mixed in with the catches. Captain Jim has been fishing between Ambrose and Scotland.

The **Pilot II** reported very good fishing for whiting running 1-3 lbs. and ling running 2-3 lbs. On Saturday, fares averaged 60-80 fish and were back at the dock by Noon. The skipper reminded us that the fishing area is a short, twenty minute ride from the dock.



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- 4 fillets of ling
- 2 tablespoons of grated onions
- 1 tablespoon of chopped celery
- 4 tablespoons of butter
- 3 slices of toasted bread broken in small pieces
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- juice of whole lemon
- grated rind of one lemon
- salt, pepper and nutmeg to flavor

Saute' onion and celery in butter. Add broken bread and then the remaining ingredients. Grease a baking dish and spread lemon dressing to cover dish. Place 2 fillets in bottom of dish and cover with dressing. Place two other fillets on top of dressing, cover with remaining dressing. Squeeze lemon juice over all, dust with paprika and dot with butter. Bake at 375 degrees for 40 minutes. *Serves four.*

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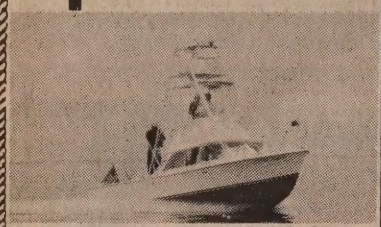

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Twelve-year-old Noah Bacher made his first striper catch a memorable one. Noah landed a double header of schoolies while trolling at Prospect Point on the Ruddy 'Ol Mable. Subscriber Club photo.

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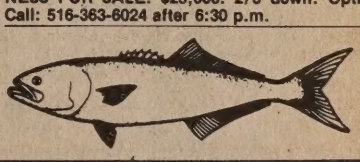

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